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MONTANA LETTER

March 29, 1973

WILSON APPOINTED TO COMMITTEE

Today we'd like to introduce you to Jimme L. Wilson, a Sanders County rancher, and the newest member of our State ASC committee. He has been appointed by Secretary of Agriculture Earl L. Butz to fill the vacancy left when Joel Antrim resigned.

Jimme is a native Montanan whose grandparents homesteaded in Carbon County. He attended Laurel schools and then graduated from the University of Montana in 1954. Later he did graduate work there and at the University of Maryland. He served four years with the U.S. Army as a liaison pilot in West Germany.

He has been actively engaged in farming since 1958 and now owns and operates the 1,200-acre Bonnie J Ranch near Whitepine. The diversified operation specializes in producing replacement Hereford heifers, as well as small grains, timber and Quarter horses.

He is presently serving on the executive board of the Montana Stockgrowers Association and is president of the Western Montana Stockmen's Association. He has served as Sanders County chairman of Rural Area Development and been an FHA committeemen and an alternate on the ASC county committee. He is also chairman of the 4-H Council Livestock committee, organizational

leader of the Whitepine 4-H club, chairman of the Whitepine Community Church board and has been a member of the Thompson Falls school board.



With the appointment of Jimme L. Wilson (standing center), the State committee is again complete. Other members are Roy Killenbeck (standing left) chairman, Torlief Aasheim (standing right), director of the Montana Extension Service, and Harold Nelson (seated left). State executive director is Leo S. Kolstad (seated right).

Jimme has already attended his first State committee meeting where he was welcomed and became further acquainted with the responsibilities of the State committee. He brings to the committee a

background and experience which will certainly be valuable in our deliberations. We welcome and look forward to this association with him.

REAP ACCOMPLISHMENTS NOTED

One of the activities in the State office now is the compilation of material for our 1972 report of activities. This comprehensive summary doesn't get the exposure we feel it deserves since statistics tend to be somewhat dull reading.

One section will cover rural environmental assistance cost-sharing activities. We are including a summarization of that portion of the report here for the benefit of many of you who are interested in how this conservation and environmental improvement money was used. The summarization shows types of practices as percentages of the total program in the State.

Livestock Practices

Seeding permanent cover	24.06
Cross fences, fireguards, deferred grazing	6.62
Livestock water facilities, springs, pipelines	15.52
Livestock dams	14.09
TOTAL	60.29

Water Management Practices

Diversion ditches, dikes, etc.	4.70
Drains (all kinds)	0.39
Reorganization of systems	12.09
Land leveling	5.57
TOTAL	22.75

Forestry Practices

Timber stand improvement	1.84
Planting trees	0.81
TOTAL	2.65

Dry Cropland

Stripcropping	0.70
Sod waterways	0.97
TOTAL	1.67

Wildlife Practices

Food plots	0.02
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MONTANA 1972 REAP HIGHLIGHTS

Number participating	7,318
Cost-Shares Paid to Farmers	\$5,256,580
5% Transfer to SCS	246,851
Transfer to State Forester	3,956
Supplies & Program Services	14,248
Total Gross Assistance	5,521,635
Average per Farm in 1972 in Montana	755
(Average in U.S. is \$239 in 1971. 1972 information is not available).	
Number of Pooling Agreements in Montana	151 on 1,261 Farms

Shallow water areas	0.11
Fencing streambanks	0.08
TOTAL	0.21

Pollution Abatement Practices

Animal waste storage facilities	1.94
Sediment retention dams	0.35
Seeding a source of sediment	0.23
Solid waste disposal pits	0.71
Riprap to control sedimentation	2.32
TOTAL	5.55

Other County Developed Practices (Primarily Noxious Weed Control)	4.22
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Flood Repair Practices (F-3 Practices)	2.66
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Some of the practices listed are difficult to put into the correct category. Practice A-2, Establishing permanent

grasses and legumes, is one of these. It could be listed as a pollution abatement practice, since one of its stated purposes is to prevent wind or water erosion. Part could be listed as a dry cropland practice and the remainder on irrigated land since these are the areas on which the grass is seeded. We listed it as a livestock practice, since it does include rangeland reseeding, and in the end, all of it is used for pasture or hay for all classes of livestock. You put it where you feel it fits best. Practice A-2 was the most popular practice. It was applied on 152,910 acres on 2,824 different farms in all 56 counties. Cost-shares of \$1,257,149 were paid on this practice. This is nearly one-fourth of the State total and averaged \$8.22 per acre.

In addition to the regular REA Program, emergency conservation assistance was offered in five counties where flood had severely damaged agricultural land and structures. These five were: Jefferson, Madison, Silver Bow and Ravalli where flooding occurred in the spring of 1972 and Sweet Grass County where drainages from the Crazy Mountains caused serious flooding in August of 1971.

The statistics on these emergency measures are:

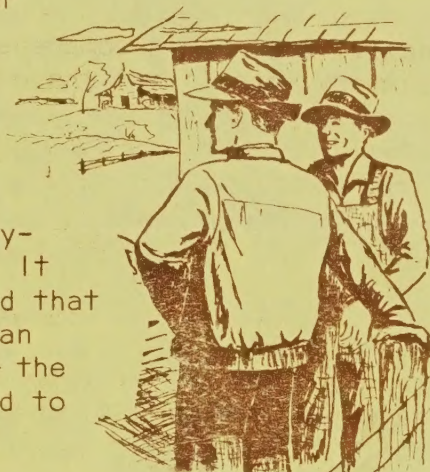
Number participating	280
Cost-Shares to Farmers	\$224,153
Transferred to SCS for technical service	13,853
Supplies Purchased	43
Total Gross Assistance	238,048
Average Assistance per farm	850
Pooling Agreements-41 on 139 farms	

FEED GRAIN SET-ASIDE CUT

Barley and corn growers who agreed during the recent sign-up to set-aside acreage equal to 25 percent of their

feed grain base got word this week that only a 10 percent set-aside is required. The announcement was made by Secretary Butz following review of the March planting intentions report.

That intention hinted at insufficient production of corn this year to fulfill projected domestic and export demand and maintain adequate carry-over stocks. It also indicated that planned soybean plantings are the minimum needed to meet demand.



Reducing the required set-aside under the "full compliance" provision from 25 to 10 percent of feed grain bases will free about 13.5 million acres for production. This includes an estimated 270,000 acres on Montana farms which have been enrolled for the set-aside program.

Reduction is automatic for the individual farmer and will not result in any change in the payment he was offered and agreed to at the time of enrollment in the program. Haying, year-round grazing, or production of alternate oil-seed crops on the remaining set-aside will be optional with the same dollars-per-acre deduction as before.

USDA officials estimate that an additional 2.5 to 3.5 million of the acres freed for production will be planted to corn with the remainder available for other crops and for haying and grazing.

Any producer affected by this change in set-aside requirement who may have already had his set-aside land inspected and measured by ASCS may secure a remeasurement at no additional cost.

SUGARBEET WAGE RATES UP

The minimum wages sugarbeet growers must pay to qualify for sugar payments this year will be somewhat higher than last year. The new rates become effective April 9.

For hand labor operations performed on an hourly basis, this year's minimum rate will be \$2.15, an increase of 15 cents. Rates for piecework operations on a per acre basis will be (with 1972 for comparison): thinning, \$15.50 (\$14.50); hoeing, \$20 (\$19); hoe-trimming, \$24 (\$22.50),

and weeding, \$13 (\$12). The weeding rate will apply whether it is done following one of the other operations or as the first hand labor operation on fields that have been machine-thinned and treated with herbicides.



A change in this year's determination will require producers to pay workers when each hand labor operation on a farm is completed, unless they agree in writing to some other arrangement. Previously, determinations have required only that workers performing several operations on a farm be paid upon completion of all work.

This year's determination continues to impose penalties on producers who employ children under the age of 14 years or who allow those between the ages of 14 and 16 to work more than eight hours per day.

SPREADING IT THIN ... AND QUICK

LAKE AND HILL COUNTY farmers will be included in a survey to secure information on farm family spending. The information will be used to update the prices paid index, an economic

indicator of how farmers are doing compared with other groups in the economy...

OAT PRICE SUPPORT this year will again be based on a national average of 54 cents per bushel, the same as for 1972. The base rate is for No. 3 grade with premiums and discounts for other qualities...

APRIL 1 IS THE beginning in many counties of the five-month period during which set-aside acreage may not be grazed if the operator plans to earn full pay-

ment. Year-round grazing, haying and alternate oilseed production are permitted on set-aside with prior notification of the ASCS office and a reduced payment...EACH UNIT OF BEEF production requires eight units of feed. For pork, it is a 4-to-1 ratio and for chickens, it takes 2½ pounds of feed to make a pound of poultry...WOOL AND UNSHORN LAMB incentive payments will be made early next month to producers on their 1972 marketings. Don't know the 1972 average of payment rate yet. Incidentally, how about these current wool prices--Sweet Grass pool, \$1.3555 per pound; Circle area, \$1.35 a pound at the ranch; Fairfield area, \$1.30 a pound for April delivery; Yellowstone pool, \$1.2764 per pound. Just a sample...



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